

Message Text

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ACTION ACDA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 ERDA-05 CIAE-00 H-02 INR-07

IO-13 L-03 NSAE-00 OIC-02 OMB-01 PA-01 PM-04 PRS-01

SAJ-01 SAM-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 TRSE-00 NSC-05 /092 W

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R 171716Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1144

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USDEL MBFR VIENNA

USNMR SHAPE

CINC EUR VAIHINGEN

CINC USAREUR HEIDELBERG

CINC USAFE RAMSTEIN

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PARM, NATO, MBFR, GW

SUBJECT: GERMAN SECURITY POLICY VIEWS

REF: BONN 6507 DTG 151729Z APR 76

BEGIN SUMMARY: A RECENT NEWSPAPER ARTICLE HAS TENDED TO REFUTE DEFENSE MINISTER LEBER'S PREVIOUSLY VOICED COMMENTS (REFTEL) ABOUT MORE CREDIBLE DETERRENCE THROUGH PRECISION-GUIDED MUNITIONS -- THE SO-CALLED "TECHNOLOGICAL THRESHOLD" -- THEREBY REAFFIRMING FRG ALLEGIANCE TO THE TRADITIONAL DETERRENCE "TRIAD" OF CONVENTIONAL, TACTICAL NUCLEAR AND STRATEGIC NUCLEAR FORCES. END SUMMARY.

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1. THE AUGUST 13 EDITION OF BONN'S "GENERAL ANZEIGER"

CARRIED A PAGE-LONG ARTICLE BY WOLF J. BELL ABOUT FRG PLANS FOR REEQUIPPING THE BUNDESWEHR WITH NEW WEAPONS SYSTEMS AND TECHNOLOGY FOR THE 1980'S. (COMMENT: BELL IS A WELL-CONNECTED POLITICAL JOURNALIST USED ON OCCASION BY FRG OFFICIALS TO FLOAT VIEWS TO THE PUBLIC). THE ARTICLE WAS APPARENTLY BASED ON BACKGROUND BRIEFINGS WITH SENIOR DEFENSE MINISTRY MILITARY AND CIVILIAN OFFICIALS, WITH STATE SECRETARY DR. SIEFGRIED MANN THE ONLY PERSON SPECIFICALLY NAMED.

2. BELL WROTE OF CONCERN IN GERMAN MILITARY CIRCLES THAT THE PUBLIC MAY HAVE FANTASIZED ABOUT THE CAPABILITIES OF MODERN WEAPONS. HE CONTINUED THAT THE MILITARY FEARED THERE WOULD BE A BLURRING OF THE LINE BETWEEN CONVENTIONAL MILITARY MEANS AND NUCLEAR WEAPONS. ACCORDING TO BELL'S MILITARY SOURCES, REALITY WAS MORE SOBERING, ALTHOUGH STIMULATING ENOUGH WITHOUT EMBELLISHMENT.

3. THE ARTICLE REAFFIRMED FRG BELIEF IN THE CONCEPT OF THE "TRIAD" IN ATLANTIC DETERRENCE STRATEGY, POINTING OUT THAT MODERN CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS COULD NOT REPLACE THE TACTICAL NUCLEAR COMPONENT. IN THE FRG'S VIEW, EVEN THE SMALLEST AND MOST PRECISE NUCLEAR BATTLEFIELD WEAPONS WOULD ALWAYS RETAIN THE SPECIAL CHARACTER OF BEING ATOMIC WEAPONS.

4. THE MAJOR PART OF THE ARTICLE WAS DEVOTED TO A COMPREHENSIVE RUNDOWN OF THE CAPABILITIES OF CURRENTLY OPERATIONAL WEAPONS SYSTEMS AS WELL AS THOSE STILL UNDER DEVELOPMENT. INCLUDED IN THE LISTING WERE THE MRCA TORNADO, CLASS 122 FRIGATE, LEOPARD II AV TANK, MARDER PERSONNEL CARRIER, GEPPARD ANTI-AIRCRAFT SYSTEM, MILAN, HOT AND TOW ANTI-TANK ROCKETS, AND THE BO-105 ANTI-TANK HELICOPTER.

5. BELL NOTED THAT PLANNING FOR THIRD GENERATION WEAPONS HAD LONG SINCE BEGUN, BUT MANY DIFFICULTIES REMAINED TO BE OVERCOME. HE WARNED THAT NO LEAP INTO A UTOPIAN MILITARY FUTURE WAS TO BE EXPECTED. THE THIRD GENERATION LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WEAPONS NAMED INCLUDED: SELF-GUIDED MISSILES ("FIRE AND FORGET"), LASER ILLUMINATORS, INTERFERENCE FREE SENSORS (ESPECIALLY INFRA-RED DEVELOPMENTS), ECCM, BETTER RECONNAISSANCE SYSTEMS (DRONES, SLAR), AND AWACS. REGARDING AWACS, BELL POINTED OUT THAT A NATO DECISION WAS REQUIRED THIS YEAR, BUT HE GAVE NO HINT ABOUT FRG WILLINGNESS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROJECT. HE WROTE THAT THE SYSTEM WAS "EXTRAORDINARILY EXPENSIVE"

AND VULNERABLE TO ENEMY ATTACK.

6. STATE SECRETARY MANN WAS QUOTED AS EXPRESSING THE VIEW THAT NEW WEAPONS WOULD ADD TO THE BUNDESWEHR'S ABILITY TO STOP A CONVENTIONAL ATTACK. ALSO, FEWER WEAPONS WOULD BE REQUIRED SINCE THEY WERE MORE EFFICIENT, ALTHOUGH APPROPRIATE QUANTITIES MUST BE ON HAND BECAUSE OF THE AREA TO BE DEFENDED.

7. AS FOR CRUISE MISSILES, BELL INDICATED THEY COULD

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PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE FUTURE. HOWEVER, HE HAD

NOTHING SPECIFIC TO CONTRIBUTE REGARDING WHAT GERMAN
PLANNERS MIGHT LIKE TO DO WITH SUCH SYSTEMS.

8. COMMENT: THE CONCERN, THAT BELL ATTRIBUTED TO
MILITARY SOURCES, ABOUT THE BLURRING OF THE LINE BETWEEN
CONVENTIONAL AND NUCLEAR WEAPONS AMOUNTS TO A SCALING
DOWN OF DEFENSE MINISTER LEBER'S PREVIOUSLY VOICED VIEW
ON THE "TECHNOLOGICAL THRESHOLD," THE THRUST OF WHICH
WAS THAT DETERRENCE WAS BECOMING MORE CREDIBLE AND CON-
SEQUENTLY THERE WAS MORE SECURITY THROUGH PRECISION-
GUIDED MUNITIONS (PGM'S) (REFTEL). LEBER ALSO REFERRED
TO ATOMIC WEAPONS AS NATO'S GREAT STRATEGIC SUPPORT FOR
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THE STRATEGY OF DETERRENCE BUT ALSO IMPLIED -- ALBEIT
INDIRECTLY -- THAT THE TACTICAL NUCLEAR COMPONENT OF THE
TRIAD MIGHT ONE DAY BE SUPERSEDED BY PGM'S.

SINCE PUBLICATION OF LEBER'S REMARKS ON THE "TECH-
NOLOGICAL THRESHOLD," SEVERAL FMOD OFFICIALS HAVE
EXPRESSED RESERVATIONS ABOUT LEBER'S VIEW THAT THE
CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS MILLENNIUM HAS PRACTICALLY ARRIVED.
IT WAS NOT SURPRISING, THEREFORE, THAT THE PRESENT
ARTICLE ATTEMPTED TO DEMYTHOLOGIZE THE CAPABILITIES OF
MODERN CONVENTIONAL WEAPONRY, WHILE POINTING OUT THAT
THE FRG STILL PRINCIPALLY RELIED FOR DETERRENCE ON
NUCLEAR WEAPONS WHICH WERE AND MUST BE IN A SPECIAL
CATEGORY.
HILLENBRAND

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